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INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7935
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2522
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 8478
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4417
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 3039
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 005359

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: SITREP 2: BHUTTO, FAMILY TO LARKHANA; MUSHARRAF ADDRESSES NATION; DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE

REF: ISLAMABAD 5358

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Bhutto's December 27 assassination caused immediate reactions throughout Pakistan: Musharraf addressed the nation calling for calm, while PPP supporters spontaneously rallied, causing damage to cars and select buildings. Bhutto's body will likely be moved to Larkhana (Bhutto's ancestral home) tonight, and Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari should arrive in Karachi from Dubai very soon. CoDel Specter will tentatively depart early (tomorrow morning); other Codels are encouraged to postpone travel to Post. End summary.

¶2. (U) Rawalpindi General Hospital confirmed that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Benazir Bhutto was fatally injured by a bullet wound to her neck.

¶3. (U) Musharraf addressed the nation at about 2100 hours (local) to offer his public condolences for the Bhutto loss. He asked for calm across the country and vowed that the terrorists behind the assassination would be brought to justice, saying "Terrorists pose the greatest threat to Pakistan."

¶4. (U) Following an emergency cabinet meeting, the GOP declared three days of mourning. The PPP is calling for 40 days of mourning (through February 5).

¶5. (U) Spontaneous demonstrations, including sporadic violence and arson, by PPP supporters have broken out throughout the country. Large groups have gathered in Lahore (in front of the Press Club, near CG Lahore), Peshawar, Karachi, Quetta and Sialkot. Cars and some buildings (banks, a police station, Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q) party offices) have been smashed and set on fire.

¶6. (U) Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, and one of the Bhutto daughters is en route to Karachi from Dubai and are expected to arrive before morning. Bhutto's body may be moved to Larkhana (Sindh), the Bhutto family's ancestral home, tonight.

¶7. (C) CODEL Specter (Senator Arlen Specter, Congressman Patrick Kennedy) will cut short their visit, tentatively departing December 28 morning. Senator Specter, Congressman Kennedy and Ambassador laid a condolence wreath at the PPP's Central Secretariat Headquarters in Islamabad. Codel

Voinovich, expected to arrive December 30, has been advised to postpone their trip.

¶8. (SBU) Embassy held an EAC meeting at 2000 hours (local) (septel).
PATTERSON